

New Chapter in Hemisphere Health

DR. Abraham Horwitz of Chile took the oath of office as director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau, Washington, D.C., January 15, 1959, to begin his duties on February 1. A few days later, in Geneva, he was formally inducted as director, Regional Office for the Americas, World Health Organization. Dr. Fred L. Soper, who is completing his third 4-year term as bureau director, now becomes director emeritus.

Participating in the ceremonies held in the Hall of the Americas of the Pan American Union were Dr. Soper; Dr. Guillermo Arbona, secretary of health of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and president of the 15th Pan American Sanitary Conference; Dr. Jose A. Mora, Secretary General of the Organization of American States; and Dr. Carlos Diaz-Coller of Mexico, chairman of the executive committee of the Pan American Health Organization.

Selections from the remarks on this occasion follow:

The Pan American Health Organization

"The 1947 constitution of the Pan American Sanitary Organization, now the Pan American Health Organization, boldly declares its field to be the entire Western Hemisphere, and opens its doors to all governments of the Americas to participation in the coordinated effort to combat disease, lengthen life, and promote physical and mental health. The agreements negotiated with the World Health Organization in 1949 and with the Organization of American States in 1950 have set the pattern for bridging the gap between the United Nations system and that of the Organization of American States, with a single technical, nonpolitical operating agency representing both systems.

"The Pan American Sanitary Bureau was created in 1902 with the limited objective of aiding the American republics in preventing the spread of epidemic diseases from one maritime port to another with a minimal interruption to the movement of ships. [The Bureau serves as the operating arm of the Pan American Health Organization, which is a specialized agency of the Organization of American States, and also as regional office of the World Health Organization.]

"The inauguration of Dr. Horwitz finds the Pan American Health Organization with a declared long-range hemispherical program devoted to three general activities:

- The strengthening of the fundamental health services of all countries of the Americas.
- The expansion of education and training programs and facilities for health workers.
- The coordination of national communicable disease control programs in campaigns of total regional eradication.

"To these must be added a fourth which is becoming increasingly important: the development and administration of special cooperative, long-term combined research training and field demonstration control programs in special fields. The Bureau has pioneered in such programs in the fields of nutrition, yellow fever, aftosa (foot and mouth disease), and the zoonoses.

"The mere enumeration of these objectives emphasizes the need for, and the advantages of, a continentwide health program with full participation of all countries of the Americas. . . .

"The Pan American Health Organization has made far-reaching commitments. It is committed to the eradication of malaria from the Western Hemisphere. Here it is in the fore-

Illusory Walls

“Whether we like it or not we live on a world scale; problems of sickness, ignorance, and hunger call for worldwide solutions. We can say where is the gate of a town; the frontier of a State, and what lines trace out the profile of a continent. But who could show on the map where the realm of tuberculosis begins or where the empire of illiteracy ends? Evils merge into one another. Just as the proximity of a sick person is a danger to the healthy, so the very existence of the ignorant and the starving is a disgrace to those who eat their fill and to those who enjoy the benefits of an education to which millions of their brethren have no access. And this disgrace is not without its dangers. . . . Progress cannot be other than collective if it is not to bear within it the seeds of its own destruction.”—DR. JAIME TORRES BODET, *Secretary of Education of Mexico, quoted by Dr. Carlos Diaz-Coller.*

front of a drive toward eradication of malaria throughout the world. Eradication programs for smallpox, yaws, and urban yellow fever have also been approved by the governing bodies.

“Dr. Horwitz enjoys a distinguished career in public health. He brings to his new position a rich experience in the teaching and practice of public health in his own country, Chile, and in this organization. Dr. Horwitz has the advantage of some years of experience on the staff of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau and in recent years has served as his country’s representative on the governing bodies of the organization. With his intimate knowledge of the organization’s work, with the whole-hearted support of the member governments extended at the 15th Pan American Sanitary Conference and with the respect and affection which he enjoys among his colleagues on the Bureau’s staff, the organization can look forward to a period of increasing fruitful activity under his leadership.”—DR. FRED L. SOPER, *director emeritus of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau, Regional Office of the World Health Organization.*

The State of Well-Being

“The concept of health as stated in the opening words of the constitution of the World Health Organization—a state of physical, emotional, and social well-being—is a challenging one. It seems to me that this definition makes

‘health’ synonymous with ‘happiness.’ It is only natural that our efforts have been directed mostly toward the promotion of the physical well-being of people. All of us in the public health field recognize the present and continuing priority of the prevention of death and disease, so much of which is completely unnecessary in the light of present-day knowledge.

“I cannot let this occasion pass, however, without calling attention again to the wider concept of health. Obviously, physical well-being contributes to emotional and social well-being; nevertheless, I feel that those of us in the health field must also find methods to promote emotional and social well-being directly.

“To be successful, the malaria eradication programs of today require the active participation of local communities and individuals in local communities. It has been clearly demonstrated that to obtain this participation efficiently the techniques of the behavioral sciences must be used; thus knowledge in the emotional and social fields furthers physical health.

“Perhaps in the field of child health it is easier to illustrate a direct approach to emotional and social well-being. In the practice of pediatrics, in child health clinics and conferences, major emphasis has been on the child’s nutrition and his protection against communicable diseases. The trend now, however, is for health workers to widen their scope and to consider the totality of the physical, emotional, and social well-being of the child. Disordered

behavior is just as clear a sign of the failure of the health team as continued prevalence of malaria. We must eradicate malaria but we must also help the people, whose lives we save, to be happy and productive.

"I feel certain that as more knowledge is accumulated in the behavioral sciences we will be better able to understand the individual person as a physical, emotional, and social being, as a member of the family, and of the community. This knowledge will enable us health workers to make a much greater contribution to the happiness of the human being."—DR. GUILLERMO ARBONA, *secretary of health of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.*

The Purest Expression of Humanism

"After 57 years of effective accomplishment in the field of public health, the countries of this hemisphere have shown, without ostentation, the real possibilities of mutual understanding and cooperation for a noble cause. This is the essential meaning of the mission being performed by the Pan American Health Organization, of which the Pan American Sanitary Bureau is the secretariat. Its objectives are the purest expression of that humanism which thinks of man as the beginning and the end of all.

"To prevent disease, to prolong life, and to promote the health and welfare of the people are the purposes that our organization has been developing in this century, maintaining constant progress as our culture has evolved and as our society has gone through its vicissitudes. And for this reason, eradication of communicable diseases has been, and still is, in the forefront of the work of the organization.

"More than knowledge and experience, eradication of disease requires creative imagination, willingness to serve, perseverance, and courage. And these are some of the characteristics of the personality of Dr. Fred L. Soper, my illustrious predecessor, who has been called, with all justice, 'citizen of the Americas' in recognition of his work on behalf of continental health. . . .

"The path to be followed by the organization is well established. The doctrine is solid and clear, the principles and the methods well

proven, and the structure is flexible enough to be adapted to progress and needs. We will continue with the present programs of eradication of malaria and other scourges, and will start new ones against other diseases as soon as research and knowledge suggest the possibility. For eradication is a fight of man in his effort to survive against the designs of nature.

"While the countries are making substantial progress in this field, the need for more and well-prepared experts in the different branches of public health has become crucial. Their presence is indispensable for both national and international programs. Our organization will help to prepare them in the full breadth of the university spirit, having mankind and its environment as their ever-present objective. They should carry out their tasks mindful of the vision of the people and their feelings. With dedicated workers, every activity in public health is possible: to reduce infant mortality to rational levels, to provide better sanitation, to improve and to extend medical care, to strengthen local and national health services. In summary, to contribute to the welfare of the people and, thus, to the economic development of the countries.

"The technical progress of our time has increased enormously the scope and the consequences of human actions. It has stressed the need for a moral conscience above interests and conveniences. In the field of health our course is clear. The long and fruitful history of the Pan American Health Organization has demonstrated single-mindedness of purpose, looking steadily towards betterment of the health of the peoples of the Americas. Because I believe wholeheartedly that this goal is practical and realistic, I propose to continue the work of the organization along the lines which have been so well established. To achieve these ends I shall rely on the understanding and support of the member governments and their leaders in public health; on the joint effort of public and private international organizations, and on the devoted collaboration of the excellent staff of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau. I humbly offer my willingness to serve."—DR. ABRAHAM HORWITZ, *director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau.*